

164th Session of the Council – written correspondence procedure
Item 12 – Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2020-21
Secretariat response to written questions from the Council

1. The Secretariat would like to express appreciation for the comments received from Members on item 12 of the Agenda - *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2020-21*. All comments are well noted.
2. The unpredictability of the Covid-19 pandemic situation and related public health concerns have affected the scheduling of meetings at FAO and other Rome-based Agencies, including those of its Governing Bodies.
3. The Director-General is in the process of carrying out inclusive consultations with all relevant stakeholders in determining the dates as well as the modality for FAO's Governing Body meetings and other main sessions.
4. The proposed rescheduled dates presented to the Council in *Appendix A* of document CL 164/LIM/1, in particular the dates for the Regional Conferences and the Technical Committees of the Council, are necessarily tentative in light of ongoing consultations. Accordingly, Council endorsement of *Appendix A* will need to be modulated with allowance for adjustments to the schedule arising from such consultations.
5. The scheduling and modalities of meetings of the Technical Committees will be decided upon in close coordination with the Chairpersons of these Committees as well as their Bureaux, responding therefore to the individual requirements of each Technical Committee, without prejudice to the integrity of the governance role of all Committees.
6. The same consultation process will apply to the meetings of the Committee on World Food Security, which has been tentatively scheduled for a series of virtual meetings during "World Food Week" in October 2020 and a plenary Session in February 2021.
7. The organization of the Regional Conferences, and the finalization of the dates of these important Governing Body meetings, will involve a broader consultation process including the respective Host Governments, the Regional Groups and the Organization. Where the respective needs and circumstances of each region may differ, the Regional Conferences may be held in a variety of formats, depending upon the needs and availability of Members, as well as the conditions in each of the regions.
8. The present status of dates for the Regional Conference is as follows:
 - 32nd Regional Conference for Europe - the Government of Uzbekistan, as well as the Europe Regional Group, have agreed upon 2 – 4 November 2020
 - 36th Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean - the Government of Nicaragua has agreed to new dates of 19-21 October 2020
 - Other Regional Conferences - consultations with host governments and other stakeholders are ongoing
9. With regard to the modality of forthcoming meetings, the continuation of virtual formats cannot be excluded and may represent the most likely scenario for the second half of 2020. Meeting hosts and secretariats should be prepared for a worst-case scenario presenting itself in the following months, in terms of prevailing pandemic conditions as well as applicable travel restrictions that may hinder physical participation of delegates.

Consultations are ongoing to consider options and emerging best practices with a view to streamlining virtual meetings, where necessary.

10. In relation to the 43rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, its work would be based on the results of the 79th Session of the Codex Executive Committee, to be held virtually from 13 to 20 July 2020. The virtual Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission would take place on 24 and 25 September 2020. Its report would subsequently be discussed and adopted on 12 October 2020, also virtually.
11. The Bureau of the Committee on Commodity Problems (CCP) has agreed to hold its 73rd Session from 10 to 12 March 2021, as indicated in Document CL 164/LIM/1, *Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions 2020-21*.
12. The sessions of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures (CPM) are not normally included in the Calendar of Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions. The 15th Session of the CPM was postponed from its original dates in April 2020, and consultations will be held shortly with the CPM Bureau on rescheduled dates.
13. The Calendar of FAO Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions is developed and maintained in consultation with the other Rome-based Agencies, and any adjustments to the schedule of meetings in *Appendix A* will be undertaken on the basis of said consultation *inter alia* to avoid overlap of meetings at FAO, IFAD and WFP.
14. The Organization will pursue its ongoing consultations with all stakeholders to ensure that dates as well as formats for upcoming meetings are confirmed as quickly as possible. Members will be kept updated on the schedule and/or modalities of meetings of Governing Bodies and other Main Sessions in a timely manner through the established channels of communication.